



SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION, INC.

ALABAMA • FLORIDA • GEORGIA • MISSISSIPPI • NORTH CAROLINA • SOUTH CAROLINA



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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
Department of Health and Human Services
5630 Fishers Lane
Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

To Whom It May Concern:

We are informed that the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has filed a petition to destroy the oyster industry in this part of the world. It seems to us CSPI is just another in a long line of special interest environmental groups who wish to put government in more control of our lives.

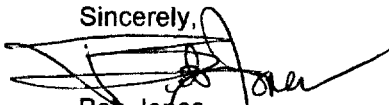
Consumption of raw oysters is a consumer choice that should not be stripped away by FDA because of a political petition put forth by CSPI. The oyster industry regrets illness or death to any person from eating raw oysters. We don't believe a healthy person is at risk from eating raw oysters. Risk is limited to those people within the population who are not well. We have tried to educate people at risk and have helped in distribution of educational material over the years pointing out that immune-suppressed people should not eat raw oysters or other raw food because their system has been impaired. We also regret illnesses and death that comes from drinking whiskey or driving too fast on the Interstate. But, there are thousands of people who get ill and die from a wide variety of food sources every day and if the government is going to prevent consumer choice relating to consumption of eating raw oysters then it must stop consumer choice in all other areas where a person could become ill or die.

The regulation of the oyster industry is strictly monitored by the states as well as the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission and FDA. I am a certified HACCP Trainer and have trained in excess of 600 company employees in the past two years. Each and every trainee was shown what procedures must be followed in the sale and distribution of oysters under the HACCP regulations. Harvesting only from approved areas, proper tagging and maintenance of proper temperature at all times gives adequate protection to the consumers as was decided by the HACCP Alliance that wrote the curriculum.

Forcing the oyster industry to buy technology from the only company with such technology creates a monopoly of the worst kind. We are not sure the technology is all that it is cracked up to be as far as 100% safety is concerned and we doubt the taste and texture is up to the quality of a naturally served oyster. What a monumental financial windfall this petition would be for the company with the technology.

We respectfully request that FDA deny the CSPI petition and after such denial, work with the mainstream oyster industry in developing more and better educational programs to inform consumers with immune-suppressed systems to cook the oysters before they consume them but let the rest of us have a choice.

Sincerely,



Bob Jones
Executive Director

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Serving the Southeastern Seafood Industry proudly since 1952



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